The Relationship Between the Supportive Principal Behavior Dimension and Teachers’ Perceptions of Self-Efficacy in Rural Schools

Elizabeth Lackey
beth.lackey@knoxschools.org

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SUPPORTIVE PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOR DIMENSION AND TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-EFFICACY IN RURAL SCHOOLS

Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the Carter and Moyers School of Education at Lincoln Memorial University

by

Elizabeth Holliday Lackey

August 2019
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband Bob who has always been my greatest supporter and encourager; my children, J.R., Jacob, and Emily, who have served as my inspiration and motivation; my parents, Ken and Shirley, who have always encouraged me to learn and better myself; and finally, to all of the teachers, families, and students with whom I have worked for over 30 years. Thank you for representing hope, wonder, and an opportunity for a better world.
Acknowledgments

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Abstract

The researcher focused on the principal behavior dimensions that principals exhibited in interactions with staff members and the relationship those behaviors had on teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in rural schools. In this study, the researcher surveyed 96 rural elementary school teachers in a southeastern state to examine the relationship between the principal behavior dimensions using the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire-Revised for Elementary Schools and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy using the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale. The researcher used a Pearson r to analyze the results of three research questions related to the relationship between the supportive principal behavior dimensions and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in student engagement, use of instructional strategies, and classroom management. The researcher identified that the supportive principal behavior dimensions indicated a significant relationship with teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in student engagement, use of instructional strategies, and classroom management.
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Chapter I: Introduction to the Study

As humans have a personality, schools have an organizational climate (Halpin, 1967). McGiboney (2016) stated that when adults reflected on their school experiences, they recollected their feelings of connectedness with friends, the condition of the building, their support from their teachers, and their feelings when they entered the building. This visceral experience connected those individuals with the climate or *feel* within the school building (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991; McGiboney, 2016). Hoy et al. (1991) analyzed school climate through a social systems approach and defined the organizational climate of schools as “the relatively enduring quality of the school environment that is experienced by participants, affects their behavior, and is based on their collective perception of behavior in schools” (p. 8). Hoy et al. (1991) further described school climate as “the extent to which the school atmosphere promotes openness, colleagueship, professionalism, trust, loyalty, commitment, pride, academic excellence, and cooperation” (p. 2). The nature of the relationships and the interactions and behaviors both among and between teachers and the school principal helped to shape teachers’ perceptions of the overall school climate (Halpin & Croft, 1962; Hoy et al., 1991).

Bandura (1997) suggested that the relationship between the environment, behavior, and cognitive, affective, and personal experiences shaped decision-making through perceived self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1997), perceived self-efficacy was “[t]he beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). Bandura (1997) stated that self-efficacy
existed in the context of a specific environment and that perceptions of self-efficacy fluctuated based on the situation and an individual’s experiences with similar situations.

The researcher considered the interplay between the social milieu of the school organizational climate, teachers’ sense of self-efficacy, and the nature of principal behavior dimensions as important factors impacting this study. Moore and Esselman (1992) found a strong relationship between school climate, teacher self-efficacy, and the notion of teacher influence on school decision-making within the school atmosphere or climate. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2007) and Calik, Sezgin, Kavgaci, and Kilinc (2012) identified school climate and principal leadership as important environmental factors that impacted teachers’ sense of self-efficacy. Hoy et al. (1991) identified three principal behavior dimensions (i.e., supportive, directive, and restrictive) as leadership characteristics that impacted the organizational climate of a school. Specific principal behaviors that reinforced and sustained teacher efficacy included inspiring teachers, recognizing efforts, managing student behavior, empowering, encouraging collaboration, providing support, and creating a positive climate (Blase & Blase, 2001; Hipp, 1996; Hoy et al., 1991; Moolenar, Daly, & Sleegers, 2010; Riehl & Sipple, 1996).

The unique characteristics of rural schools served as the designated space for investigation into the connections between school organizational climate and teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy. Johnson and Strange (2005) identified issues such as strained resources, isolation, and funding inequalities as problems rural principals faced. Knoblauch and Woolfolk Hoy (2008) identified strengths of rural schools such as small class size, a strong sense of community, and increased student achievement; however, the
same researchers identified the struggles that rural teachers faced in relation to resources, teacher quality, and student discipline and found that issues such as high poverty rates, low salaries, and a lack of a viable curriculum impacted rural schools more heavily than suburban ones. Gagnon and Mattingly (2012) identified higher concentrations of teachers new to the profession in rural schools with already strained resources designated for mentoring and instructional support. Additionally, principals in rural schools faced challenges in relation to hiring and retaining teachers, providing professional development, serving as an instructional leader, and creating a positive, inclusive school climate (Monk, 2007; Wieczorek & Manard, 2018).

**Statement of the Problem**

According to Freiberg (1999), “School climate is like the air we breathe; it tends to go unnoticed until something goes wrong” (p. 1). Teachers described an unhealthy climate as oppressive and demeaning, and teachers within the organization felt overburdened and weighted down by their feelings of inadequacy and fear that impacted their abilities to make decisions or find joy in their daily work (Blase & Blase, 2003; Hoy et al., 1991). While the principal served many roles (e.g., instructional leader, school manager, and disciplinarian), the principal’s role in developing a positive climate proved vitally important to the success of the school as an organization (Blase & Blase, 2001; Gruenhart & Whitaker, 2017; Hoy et al., 1991). Hoy et al. (1991) posited that the organizational climate created the *feel* of the school, and the organizational health effected the success of the organization; therefore, an unhealthy organization negatively impacted the success of the students and the ability of teachers to do their jobs effectively. An unhealthy school climate, rooted in the dimensions of principals’
behaviors, obstructed the degree to which teachers made instructional decisions, engaged their students, and maintained discipline in their classrooms due to a negative impact on self-efficacy (Shoulders & Krei, 2015; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Teachers with a lower sense of self-efficacy ultimately impacted student achievement, collegiality, and commitment to the teaching profession (Bandura, 1993; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006; Coladarci, 1992; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Hauserman and Stick (2013) reported that teachers in grades kindergarten through 12 wanted principals who considered teachers as individuals, inspired and motivated them, and provided intellectual stimulation through participatory involvement in problem-solving and reflection. Similarly, the nature of principal interactions with teachers impacted reflection, teacher growth, and effective instruction, and positive interactions strengthened teacher decision-making and healthy relationships (Blase & Blase, 2001; Calik et al., 2012; Gruenhart & Whitaker, 2015; Hoy et al., 1991; Whitaker, 2003). Halpin and Croft (1962) identified the importance of the quality of interactions between pairs or groups of teachers and between teachers and principals through a survey designed to identify characteristics of group interactions against the behaviors of the principal. In their study of organizational climates in schools, Hoy et al. (1991) surveyed over 1,000 elementary school teachers related to principal behaviors as a means of identifying the “critical aspects of teacher-teacher and teacher-principal interactions in schools” (p. 8) and the level at which these behaviors impacted the school climate. Supportive interactions between principals and teachers brought about healthy,
productive working relationships and resulted in a healthy school climate, whereas more restrictive interactions negatively impacted the school climate (Hoy et al., 1991).

Teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy impacted the ways in which they made decisions related to the instructional strategies they used, the ways in which they managed classroom disciplinary concerns, and the ways they created lessons that engaged students (Caprara et al., 2006; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). In addition, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) and Shoulders and Krei (2015) found that teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy reported better classroom management and more student-focused classrooms that brought about greater opportunities for students’ success. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) identified the constructs of instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement as “important to critical for effective teaching” (p. 797). Chan, Lau, Nie, Lim, and Hogan (2008) identified teacher self-efficacy as the most mediating factor in relation to teacher commitment to their school.

The researcher considered the needs of teachers and principals in rural schools because of the unique nature of schools in areas that are considered rural. Coladarci (2007) stated that the need for improving educational research on rural schools through rich, contextual descriptions of rural areas as a means of creating an argument for the need of research in rural areas. Teachers in rural schools faced many challenges (e.g., isolation, less access to technology, lower wages, lack of instructional support, lack of colleagues who teach similar subjects, support for struggling students) while meeting the needs of federal and local mandates (Chang, Chiu, & Liu, 2017; Gagnon & Mattingly, 2012, 2015; Hunt-Barron, Tracy, Howell, & Kaminski, 2015; Malloy & Allen, 2007;
Monk, 2007; Reeves, 2003). Additionally, principals faced difficulties in recruiting adequately certified teachers, retaining teachers, managing budgetary requirements, and creating a positive climate, while serving as the instructional leader of the building (Chang et al., 2017; Eppley, 2009; Gagnon & Mattingly, 2012; Malloy & Allen, 2007; Monk, 2007; Reeves, 2003; White, 2008; Wieczorek & Manard, 2018; Yettick, Baker, Wickersham, & Hupfield, 2014).

The researcher examined the relationship between principal behavior dimensions and teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy to determine the ways in which the supportive principal behavior dimensions impacted teachers’ abilities to make decisions related to instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement. The researcher conducted a quantitative analysis of teacher responses to surveys designed to examine organizational climate and teacher self-efficacy to contribute to the body of research related to principal behavior dimensions, self-efficacy, and the needs of teachers in rural schools, but more importantly, to help principals create schools where teachers and students felt appreciated and valued in an environment that ensured success.

**Research Questions**

The researcher developed research questions for this study which focused on the relationship between the supportive principal behavior dimension on an individual teacher’s perception of sense of self-efficacy through the use of two surveys, Hoy’s (1986) Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire-Revised for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and Tschanne-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy’s (2001) Teachers’ Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale—Short Form (TSES). The OCDQ-RE (Hoy, 1986) survey was utilized to identify the levels of principal behavior dimensions (i.e., *supportive, directive,*...
or restrictive) based on teachers’ reflections of the climate of their school. In addition, teachers completed the TSES to identify their sense of self-efficacy in relation to classroom management, student engagement, and instructional practices. The following research questions served as the guiding factors of the study.

**Research question 1.** According to the results of teachers utilizing Hoy’s (1986) Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire-Revised for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy’s (2001) Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale—Short Form (TSES), what relationship does the supportive principal behavior dimension have on teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in student engagement in elementary schools in four rural systems in a southeastern state?

**Research question 2.** According to the results of teachers utilizing Hoy’s (1986) Organizational Climate Description for Elementary Schools-Revised for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy’s (2001) Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale—Short Form (TSES), what relationship does the supportive principal behavior dimension have on a teacher’s sense of self-efficacy in instructional strategies in elementary schools in four rural school systems in a southeastern state?

**Research question 3.** According to the results of teachers utilizing Hoy’s (1986) Organizational Climate Description for Elementary Schools-Revised for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy’s (2001) Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale—Short Form (TSES), what relationship does the supportive principal behavior dimension have on teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in classroom management in elementary schools in four rural school systems in a southeastern state?
Theoretical Framework

The researcher utilized Bandura’s (1977) Theory of Self Efficacy as the theoretical framework for the investigation of the relationship between principal behavior dimensions and teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy. Bandura (1994) defined self-efficacy as “people’s beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercised influence over events that affect their lives” (p. 71).

According to Bandura (1977), an individual’s concept of self-efficacy played an important role in how the individual processed actions and events and how those impacted the individual’s behavior. Individuals with a stronger sense of self-efficacy overcame difficulties and achieved goals more easily (Bandura, 1977), whereas an individual with a lower sense of self-efficacy recovered less quickly when faced with an obstacle or a goal not easily achievable (Bandura, 1993). Bandura (2012), Gibson and Dembo (1984), and Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) identified the importance of teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs related to perceptions of their own abilities to persist in difficult situations by identifying characteristics of teacher behaviors. Teachers with lower sense of self-efficacy demonstrated the belief that they could do little when students misbehaved or struggled academically, whereas teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy believed that, through a variety of strategies, all students could be reached and motivated (Bandura, 2012; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Bandura (2012) posited that an individual’s self-efficacy not only differed across “domains of functioning but even across different facets within an activity domain” (p. 15). Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) identified that challenge when
measuring teacher self-efficacy in particular settings related to the level of specificity
given the variable nature of teaching. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001)
studied teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy in relation to classroom management,
student engagement, and the use of instructional strategies and found that the same
teacher exhibited different levels of self-efficacy in relation to each of the constructs.

Bandura (2012) stated that “self-efficacy beliefs affected the quality of human
functioning through cognitive, motivational, and affective processes” (p. 13). In the work
environment, these internally mediating processes impacted the ways in which
individuals made decisions, how they approached new situations based on previous
experiences, the extent to which they perceived the environment to be of impact, and the
level of goals they set for themselves and their group, which ultimately impacted the
performance of the group (Bandura, 1977, 2012; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998; Wood &
Bandura, 1989). Gibson and Dembo (1984) found similar results in a study of teachers’
persistence in difficult situations, outcome expectancy in relation to student learning, and
interactions with parents and students. Good and Brophy (2008) found that a teacher
makes between 1,000 and 1,500 decisions each day regarding issues such as discipline,
instructional content, students’ academic and social-emotional needs, assessment, and
instructional strategies. Teachers need a strong sense of self-efficacy to navigate the
decisions they must make on a daily basis (Bandura, 1993; Coladarci, 1992; Skaalvik &
Skaalvik, 2007; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy,
2001).
Significance of the Project

Hoy et al. (1991) defined organizational climate as the “set of internal characteristics that distinguishes one school from another and influences the behavior of its members” (p. 8). Hoy et al. (1991) identified the characteristics of organizational climate as a set of teacher behavior dimensions and principal behavior dimensions. For the purpose of this study, the researcher focused on the principal behavior dimensions, categorized as directive, restrictive, or supportive (Hoy et al., 1991). The researcher examined the perceptions of the individuals within the organization as a means of identifying principal behavior dimensions that impacted teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy related to classroom management, student engagement, and the use of instructional strategies. This study contributed to the body of research related to organizational climate and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy through the use of analytical data related to how principal behaviors impacted an individual teacher’s sense of self-efficacy in rural schools.

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2007) connected principal leadership to teachers’ self-efficacy and suggested that schools in which the principal supported teachers, offered teachers flexibility, provided a variety of resources, and managed both students and resources, had teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy. In rural areas with both limited financial and human capital resources, it was imperative that the principal develop characteristics that support teacher self-efficacy to ensure that every student had access to a teacher able to meet his academic needs. As a result, the researcher recognized the need to identify characteristics of principals that encouraged
teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy to provide support for teachers and high levels of student achievement in a population in need of rich, contextual study (Coladarci, 2007).

**Description of the Terms**

**Classroom management.** Emmer and Stough (2001) defined classroom management as practices that teachers used to “establish order, engage students, or elicit their cooperation” (p. 103) and further explained that a teacher’s management style should match the instructional outcomes and student needs in the classroom. Tschanne-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) and Brouwers and Tomic (2000) defined classroom management as teachers’ perceptions of their abilities to control disruptive behavior, enact compliance with classroom rules, calm disruptive students, utilize a classroom management system, lessen the impact of disruptions during lessons, respond to defiant students, set clear expectations, and use classroom routines effectively. Similarly, Ming-tak and Wai-shing (2008) identified managing the learning environment, clear classroom procedures, and the use of a classroom management system as important components of successful classroom management.

**Elementary school teachers.** For the purpose of the study, the researcher identified classroom teachers of grades kindergarten through five as elementary school teachers.

**Instructional strategies.** Marzano (2007) identified instructional strategies as the activities teachers used to help students meet instructional goals. Meador (2018) defined instructional strategies as the approaches teachers used to engage students and ensure success. Tschanne-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) viewed teachers’ perceptions of their instructional strategies practices through the extent in which teachers utilized varied
assessment strategies, alternate explanations, questions, various strategies, responding to student questions, adjusting lessons to meet student needs, student comprehension, and providing academically challenging work for students. Meader (2018) also identified the importance of usage of varied strategies, based on students’ development and cognitive needs, as a means of ensuring student learning.

Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire-Revised for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE). Hoy (1986) developed the OCDQ-RE to describe the organizational climate in schools through the use of a series of questions designed to measure the quality of principal-teacher relationships. Hoy et al. (1991) identified behavior dimensions through a series of six subtests. For the purpose of this study, the researcher focused on the measures of the principal behavior dimensions subtests of the OCDQ-RE.

Principal behavior dimensions. The researcher used the principal behavior dimensions subtests portion of the OCDQ-RE (Hoy, 1986) in the study. Hoy (1986) identified three principal behavior dimensions (i.e., support, directive, and restrictive). Hoy (1986) used the term behavior dimensions to define principal behaviors related to the ways that principals monitored teachers, communicated with teachers, mandated requirements and duties, and listened to teachers’ suggestions.

Rural schools. For the purpose of this research, the researcher identified rural schools as those schools located in an area designated as rural based on Census Bureau information (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], n.d.). Ratcliffe, Burd, Holder, and Fields (2016) defined rural schools as those schools that did not meet
classification as urban or suburban. Rural schools served areas of less than 2,500 people and served students outside urban areas and urban clusters (Ratcliffe et al., 2016).

**Self-efficacy.** Bandura (1994) defined self-efficacy as “people’s beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives” (p. 71). An individual’s concept of self-efficacy played an important role in how the individual processed actions and events and how those actions and events impacted the individual’s behavior (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1977) further stated that an individual who possessed a strong sense of self-efficacy overcame difficulties and achieved goals more easily. For the purpose of this study, the researcher examined self-efficacy from the perspective of elementary classroom teachers based on their perceptions of their abilities to handle classroom situations related to instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement.

**Student engagement.** Skinner and Belmont (1993) identified the impact of the affective component of motivation on student engagement based on teachers’ perceptions of their abilities to support students, motivate them, and provide support for struggling students. Skinner and Belmont (1993) and Klem and Connell (2004) viewed student engagement as a motivational construct based on three important components (i.e., behavioral, cognitive, and emotional) and identified the importance of teacher interactions, beliefs, and behaviors on student engagement. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) defined student engagement through teachers’ perceptions of their abilities to motivate students, meet the needs of struggling students, work with families, impact student beliefs in their own success and ability to learn, and help students think creatively and critically.
Supportive principal behavior. Hoy et al. (1991) defined supportive principal behaviors through actions such as openness to suggestions, the ability to give and receive criticism, and genuine use of praise. Additionally, supportive principals treated staff members with respect and demonstrated both a professional and a personal interest in the well-being of all staff members (Hoy et al., 1991). Hoy et al. (1991) measured supportive principal behavior dimensions through the utilization of the OCDQ-RE.

Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale—Short Form (TSES). Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) developed the TSES to determine teachers’ beliefs regarding their sense of self-efficacy in relation to instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement.
Chapter II: Review of the Literature

The researcher reviewed historical and current literature related to the topics of organizational climate and self-efficacy. Additionally, the researcher explored the constructs of school organizational climate and teacher self-efficacy and identified characteristics of climate and self-efficacy in schools connected to the purpose of the study. The researcher studied the domain of principal behavior dimensions (Hoy et al., 1991) in relation to school organizational climate along with the domain of teacher self-efficacy connected to teacher beliefs regarding their self-efficacy in relation to the use of instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement (Tschanne-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Research related to the needs of rural educators served as the connecting thread between the constructs of teacher-self efficacy and school organizational climate.

Rural Schools

Rural schools across the United States faced challenges in relation to federal funding and meeting federal mandates (Yettick et al., 2014). In 2015, ESSA went into effect with the increased expectation of high-quality educational opportunities for all students connected to the expectation that equity gaps related to equitable access to experienced and effective educators for students would be addressed by all school systems (United States Department of Education, n.d.). Gagnon and Mattingly (2015) addressed the concern of equity gaps for rural students from both an economical and human capital issue based on both a smaller supply of teachers with advanced degrees, low pay, proper certification, and a fewer applicants for teaching vacancies. Gagnon and Mattingly (2015) reviewed the equity plans of 47 states in the United States to determine if the plans specifically addressed the needs of rural areas in relation to increasing access
to high-quality teachers and found that 51% of the state plans addressed the needs of staffing in rural schools based on criteria such as a local teacher development program, capacity building, communities of practice, or financial incentives. Similarly, Rosenkoetter, Irwin, and Saceda (2004) identified the need for universities and colleges to include training for teachers related to the topics of poverty and student and family needs in rural areas as a means of increasing teacher shortages in rural communities.

Principals in rural schools faced many challenges related to recruiting and retaining teachers, creating a supportive environment, and providing teachers with professional development opportunities. According to Preston, Jakubiec, and Kooymans (2013), principals struggled to implement new ideas or regulations in a community that culturally viewed change suspiciously. Monk (2007) identified the challenges related to recruiting and retaining teachers, such as lower wages, high poverty rates, and lack of job opportunities for other family members. Because rural schools had smaller staffs, the relationship between the principal and staff members impacted both retention of teachers and organizational climate (Haar, 2007; Lock, Budgen, Lunay, & Oakley, 2012; Preston et al., 2013). Haar (2007) identified the impact of a supportive principal in a case study of a science teacher in a rural school. Haar’s (2007) participant identified behavior traits such as providing support through strong leadership, providing teachers with a sense of voice, offering teachers additional planning time, and recognizing the teachers’ ability in a supportive and non-evaluative manner. Additionally, Haar (2007) identified the small size of rural schools as an asset toward establishing a supportive, trusting environment based on the belief that principals in rural schools have an opportunity to interact more closely with teachers.
Shoulders and Krei (2015) outlined the particular need to study the characteristics of highly efficacious teachers in rural areas as a means of identifying characteristics that impacted both efficacy and student achievement. Shoulders and Krei (2015) surveyed 256 high school teachers using the TSES as a means of identifying their self-efficacy beliefs in instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement. Shoulders and Krei (2015) found that rural high school teachers with more than 15 years of experience had significantly higher mean scores in the use of instructional strategies ($MS = 6.25$) when compared to teachers with 0-4 years of experience ($MS = 1.27$). Additionally, rural high school teachers with more than 15 years of experience had significantly higher mean scores in classroom management ($MS = 8.73$) when compared to teachers with 0-4 years of experience ($MS = 1.39$). Interestingly, Shoulders and Krei (2015) found little difference between the self-efficacy in student engagement of more experienced teachers ($MS = 2.20$) versus that of newer teachers ($MS = 1.61$).

**Organizational Climate**

Research related to the interactions between individuals in the workplace began in the 1930s and explanations of organizational climate developed over time as researchers examined the social context of the work environment. Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) studied the effects of organizational structure on aggression to study group behavior in *social climates*. Lewin et al. (1939) defined the social climates based on the behavior of the leaders, using the terms *authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire*, to describe the ways in which the leader interacted with the groups. Although Lewin et al. (1939) studied the interactions between adult leaders and 10-year-olds, the researchers later used the experiences from their experimental design to study group dynamics and the relationship between the individual and the environment. McGregor (1944) and
Argyris (1957) explored workplace climate and used the term *managerial climate* as a means of both defining managerial behavior and ways in which employees approached their work. To gather data related to organizational climate, Litwin and Stringer (1968) and Schneider and Bartlett (1968) developed surveys to study aspects of climate such as support, rewards, conflict, and satisfaction. These early surveys focused on a holistic definition of organizational climate rather than a climate for a specific construct (Schneider & Barbera, 2014).

Researchers used the *shared perceptions method* of defining organizational climate as a means of identifying the ways in which individuals perceived their work environments in terms of their experiences and the behaviors of the individuals within the organization (Glisson & James, 2002; Hoy, 1990; Jones & James, 1979; Joyce & Slocum, 1984; Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013). Schneider et al. (2013) defined organizational climate as the “shared perceptions of and the meaning attached to the policies, practices, and procedures employees experience and the behaviors they observe getting rewarded and that are supported and expected” (p. 362). Similarly, Chan (1998) used the term *referent-shift model* to describe organizational climate in relation to examining the attributes of an organization rather than the individual perceptions to gain consensus on the shared perceptions of all individuals in the organization. Consensus gathering, through surveys, allowed researchers to identify shared perceptions across the members of the organization (Schneider et al., 2013). Glick (1985) challenged the variety of definitions and the lack of clarity connected to the measurement of organizational climate. Glick (1985) stated, “Organizational climate is the result of sociological/organizational processes. Thus, it should be conceptualized as an

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organizational phenomenon not as a simple aggregation of psychological climate” (p. 605) and considered the aggregate perception of the group as both reliable and valid.

**School Organizational Climate**

Hoy et al. (1991) defined school organizational climate as the “set of internal characteristics that distinguished one school from another and influenced the behavior of its members” (p. 8) and further stated that the “climate of a school is the faculty’s consensus in perception of school behavior” (p. 10). Researchers used the *shared perceptions method* of defining organizational climate through surveying teachers and defining school organizational climate in relation to the perceptions of teachers and how those perceptions impacted school life (Hoy, 1990; Hoy et al., 1991). Hoy et al. (1991) identified four types of organizational climates using the OCDQ-RE (i.e., *open*, *engaged*, *disengaged*, and *closed*) based on three principal behavior dimensions (i.e., *supportive*, *directive*, and *restrictive*) and three dimensions of teacher behavior (i.e., *collegial*, *intimate* and *disengaged*). Hoy et al. (1991) developed the OCDQ-RE to survey the perceptions of teachers to identify their perceptions of organizational climate in their school based on principal and teacher behavior dimensions. In the initial study, Hoy et al. (1991) surveyed 1,071 teachers in 70 rural, urban, and suburban schools in New Jersey for a pilot study to determine reliability for the OCDQ-RE and determined the survey had a high degree of reliability in relation to the six dimensions of behavior, as represented by the following alpha coefficients: supportive (.95), directive (.89), restrictive (.80), collegial (.90), intimate (.85), and disengaged (.75). Principals and teachers in schools with open climates demonstrated respect toward each other, and the principal frequently praised staff members and trusted the professional judgement of the staff (Hoy et al., 1991). Principals in engaged climates tended to struggle with
leadership; teachers demonstrated high levels of productivity and commitment whereas principals in disengaged climates demonstrated supportive and concerned behaviors toward the staff, yet the staff ignored the principal’s efforts and demonstrated a lack of commitment (Hoy et al., 1991). According to Hoy et al. (1991), principals in schools with closed climates demonstrated controlling behaviors and treated the faculty with suspicion and mistrust.

Halpin and Croft (1962), Hoy (1990), Hoy et al. (1991), and Taiguri, Litwin, and Barnes (1968) likened the organizational climate in schools to the *personality* of an individual based on the belief that organizational climate was a social construct connected to the perceptions of teachers related to the formal and informal structures within the organization, individual personalities, and school leadership. Hoy et al. (1991) viewed climate as both an end goal and a tool for increasing the productivity and achievement in schools and further identified the characteristics of “openness, colleagueship, professionalism, trust, loyalty, commitment, pride, academic excellence, and cooperation” (p. 2) as necessary to the establishment of a positive working environment. Similarly, Mitchell, Bradshaw, and Leaf (2010) defined school climate as “beliefs, values, and attitudes that impacted the interactions between students, teachers, and administrators” (p. 272). Mitchell et al. (2010) surveyed 90 fifth-grade teachers and 900 students and examined differences in perceptions of school climate based on variables such as ethnicity, gender, age, and years of teaching experience. The researchers found teachers between the ages 41-50 rated the overall school climate more favorably than their younger colleagues and that poor classroom management was inversely related to both climate and emphasis on academics (Mitchell et al., 2010).
Overall, Mitchell et al. (2010) found that while teachers and students had similar experiences, their perceptions varied based on their individual characteristics.

Personal experiences and group dynamic served as important components of school organizational climate. Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) described climate as an attitude based on perceptions of the individuals within a school and considered it subject to change based on circumstances such as time of year or the collective attitudes of the individuals within the building. Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral (2009) defined school climate as the qualities and character of school life based on “patterns of people’s experience of school life and reflected the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures” (p. 180). Cohen et al. (2009) viewed climate as a group dynamic rather than an individual’s experience, and Gruenhart and Whitaker (2015) described climate as the “sum of responses” (p. 23) within the school environment.

Hoy and Clover (1986) identified organizational climate as the “relatively enduring quality of the school environment that (a) was affected by the principal’s leadership, (b) was experienced by teachers, (c) influenced members’ behaviors, (d) was based on collective perceptions” (p. 94). Hoy et al. (1991) used a metaphor of healthy versus unhealthy as a means of describing school organizational climate. According to Hoy et al. (1991), a healthy organization “not only survived in its environment, but continued to grow and prosper over the long term” (p. 15). The level at which the organization adapted when faced with obstacles served as evidence of a healthy climate, and the ability to adequately solve problems proved the effectiveness of the organization (Argyris, 1957; Hoy, 1990; Hoy & Miskel, 1987; Hoy et al., 1991). In addition, healthy relationships within the members of the school allowed for a positive learning
environment, greater engagement, and greater student achievement (Kilinç, 2014; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000; Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008). Unhealthy school climates resulted in behaviors such as a lack of trust among the staff, an inability to solve problems related to the functioning of the school, and feelings of disorder (Cohen et al., 2009; Hoy et al., 1991; Welsh, 2000).

The principal served as a mediating factor regarding a healthy school climate (Cohen et al., 2009; Hoy et al., 1991; Kelley, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D’Alessandro, 2013). Hoy et al. (1991) described the impact of principal openness on school organizational climate as the degree to which principals supported teachers, created a climate of trust and cooperation, and developed respect among teachers and within their relationships with teachers. In addition, principals with open school climates encouraged teachers to make decisions for themselves and were helpful and interested in the personal and professional lives of teachers (Hoy et al., 1991). Teachers in schools with open climates exhibited commitment, cooperation, and effective collegial behavior (Hoy et al., 1991; McCarley, Peters, & Decman, 2016). Schools with a closed climate had faculty members who exhibited disengaged and frustrated behaviors and principals who were controlling and rigid (Hoy et al., 1991; McCarley et al., 2016).

**Principal Behavior Dimensions**

Halpin and Croft (1962) posited that the perceptions of a leader’s behavior by members of a group were more important than the exhibited behavior of the leader. According to Hoy and Clover (1986), these measurable, collective perceptions of leadership behavior determined the organizational climate of the school and the “single most important individual in affecting the climate of the school was the principal” (p. 94). Hoy et al. (1991) and Hoy and Clover (1986) studied individual perceptions of behavior
to gain consensus regarding leadership behaviors and identified three principal behavior dimensions in relation to the degree of openness of a school climate: supportive, directive, and restrictive.

**Supportive principal behaviors.** Principals who exhibited supportive behavior toward staff demonstrated concern for both the professional and personal well-being of teachers and respected the professional abilities of the teachers (Hoy & Clover, 1986; Hoy et al., 1991). In addition, principals accepted suggestions from teachers and gave both authentic praise and constructive criticism (Hoy & Clover, 1986; Hoy et al., 1991). McCarley et al. (2016) surveyed 399 teachers in five high schools using the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Secondary Schools (OCDQ-RS) and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) and found a statistically significant relationship ($p < .001$) between idealized behaviors related to communicating values, purpose, vision and confidence, idealized attributes such as pride and respect, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational consideration, and supportive principal behaviors.

**Directive principal behaviors.** Principals who demonstrated directive behaviors closely supervised staff members and maintained both “rigid and constant control” (p. 101) over all activities in the school (Hoy & Clover, 1986). Hoy et al. (1991) surveyed teachers in 44 elementary schools (data aggregated at the school level only) and found that directive principal behaviors resulted in negative levels of faculty trust ($r = .06$) when compared to schools in which the principal exhibited supportive behaviors ($r = .58$). Additionally, teachers who identified their principal as directive perceived the school to be less effective ($r = .06$) than those who identified their principal as supportive ($r = .29$).
**Restrictive principal behaviors.** Principals who showed restrictive behaviors overloaded teachers with non-teaching demands, such as paperwork and additional duties and responsibilities that interfered with classroom responsibilities and impeded teachers’ abilities to teach (Hoy & Clover, 1986; Hoy et al., 1991). Hoy et al. (1991), surveyed teachers in 44 elementary schools (data aggregated at the school level only) and found that restrictive principal behaviors resulted in negative levels of faculty trust ($r = -0.13$) when compared to schools in which the principal exhibited supportive behaviors ($r = 0.58$). Additionally, teachers who identified their principal as restrictive perceived the school to be less effective ($r = -0.23$) than those who identified their principal as supportive.

**Self-Efficacy**

Bandura (1977) based the theory of self-efficacy on the belief that individuals processed stimuli cognitively and that one’s belief in his own abilities served as a moderating factor of future behavior. Bandura (1977) postulated that perceived self-efficacy impacted decision-making, coping skills, effort-making, and the ability to persist when a task deemed difficult. Later, Bandura (2012) identified self-efficacy as a “focal determinant because it affects behavior both directly and by its influence on the other determinants” (p. 14) such as self-evaluation, goal setting and attainment, and reactions to factors that create either barriers or encouragement toward success.

**Teacher Self-Efficacy**

Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) defined teacher self-efficacy as “the teacher’s belief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context” (p. 233). This definition developed by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) built on Bandura’s (1994) explanation of
perceived self-efficacy or “people’s beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercised influence over events that affect their lives” (p. 2). Tschannen-Moran and Woofolk Hoy (2001) further described the effects of teacher self-efficacy beliefs as “a judgment of his or her abilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among students who may be difficult or unmotivated” (p. 783).

Gibson and Dembo (1984) identified the importance of teacher self-efficacy from both a contextual and subject-matter specific application based on the impact of teacher self-efficacy on student achievement and professional commitment. O’Mara, Marsh, Craven, and Debus (2006) and Gibbs and Powell (2012) identified the importance of studying teacher self-efficacy through a domain specific measure rather than a general teacher self-efficacy measure. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) examined teacher self-efficacy in the domains of instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management because these areas represented “the richness of teachers’ work lives and the requirements of good teaching” (p. 801).

Sources of control impacted teachers’ perceptions of their self-efficacy. RAND researchers Armor et al. (1976) and Berman and McLaughlin (1977) examined the construct of teacher self-efficacy based on the work of Rotter’s (1966) locus of control definition, which explained sources of efficacy as either internal or external. Teachers with an external locus of control perceived their ability to impact student achievement based on outside factors such as environment whereas teachers with an internal locus of control expressed confidence in their abilities to impact learning and student behavior (Rotter, 1966). Armor et al. (1976) found that teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy impacted reading achievement in minority students and that teachers with a greater sense
of self-efficacy had greater student achievement. Berman and McLaughlin (1977) found that teachers with a greater sense of self-efficacy positively impacted both student achievement and use of newly learned teacher methods. Both studies utilized a two-question format, to which teachers responded based on their level of agreement and when added together, provided a teacher efficacy score. The first statement, “When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can’t do much because most of student’s motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment,” connected teachers’ beliefs about external factors that impacted student achievement (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977). Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) identified those external factors as general teaching efficacy, and Ashton and Webb (1986) and Gibson and Dembo (1984) referred to external factors as general efficacy.

The second statement, “If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students,” required teachers to reflect on their internal abilities to impact student achievement and motivation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977). Ashton and Webb (1986), Gibson and Dembo (1984), and Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) identified internal factors or abilities as personal teaching efficacy. Guskey and Passaro (1994) described teacher self-efficacy as a “multi-dimensional construct” (p. 636) derived from both personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy. After surveying 342 teachers of varying experiences and grade levels, Guskey and Passaro (1994) discovered that both personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy existed within an individual, yet the two factors occurred independent of one another and that when compared to an internal locus of control model, the factors operated independently of one another. Coladacri (1992) described the duality within teacher self-efficacy by stating
that even when teachers expressed confidence in themselves as teachers, they still expressed self-doubt in relation to their instructional abilities.

**Teacher self-efficacy and instructional strategies.** Teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs predicted their willingness to adapt instruction, use a variety of materials, and approach learning through a variety of methods to meet the academic needs of students and, ultimately, student achievement (Allinder, 1994; Guo, Connor, Yang, Roehrig, & Morrison, 2012; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) further stated that teachers with lower sense of self-efficacy tended to refer students for special education services more quickly than their peers with higher sense of self-efficacy. According to Barkley (2006), teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy impacted their abilities to meet their students’ individual needs. Barkley (2006) surveyed 42 teachers and 400 students to determine their self-efficacy beliefs related to the use of four reading strategies: prior knowledge, self-monitoring, cooperative learning, and graphic organizers. Barkley (2006) identified that teachers had high efficacy expectations related to their beliefs about the importance of all four strategies but found students identified the cooperative learning strategy as the one that would bring them the greatest outcomes. Barkley (2006) attributed this difference to lack of modeling of other strategies by teachers and the need for teachers to identify the importance of a strategy when introducing it to students.

In a study of teachers in Iran, Eslami and Fatahi (2008) utilized the TSES to measure teachers’ self-efficacy related to teaching English to their students. The teachers reported using strategies such as group discussion, real-life scenarios, and English outside of the classroom (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008). Eslami and Fatahi (2008) found that teachers rated their self-efficacy the highest in the use of a variety of instructional strategies to
teach English with a mean score of 4.26 when compared to mean of 4.17 in classroom management and a mean of 4.02 for student engagement.

Teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs impacted use of varied instructional strategies, which ultimately impacted student achievement. Stronge, Ward, and Grant (2011) compared the teaching practices of 17 teachers identified as effective based on scores in the top quartile based on student achievement gains and 15 teachers in the bottom quartile based on the same gain scores. Stronge et al. (2011) surveyed rural and urban fifth grade teachers using the TSES to identify teacher self-efficacy beliefs and conducted teacher observations to determine the effectiveness of the instruction based on questioning, classroom management, and time on task. Stronge et al. (2011) found the largest variability was between the two groups of teachers in relation to teacher self-efficacy in classroom disruptions and time on task; teachers deemed more effective based on value-added scores had fewer disruptions and stronger teacher-student relationships. In another study of fifth grade teachers, Guo et al. (2012) surveyed over 1,000 teachers and assessed teachers’ beliefs in their abilities to impact student achievement. Guo et al. (2012) found that self-efficacy served as the most significant indirect and direct effect related to positive student achievement in reading. Teachers with a higher sense of sense of self-efficacy used strategies such as academic feedback and support for learning—defined as time on task, instructional climate, responsiveness to student needs—and that students of those teachers had greater literacy achievement (Guo et al., 2012).

**Teacher self-efficacy and classroom management.** Brouwers and Tomic (2000) defined teacher self-efficacy in relation to classroom management as “teachers’ beliefs in their capabilities to maintain classroom order” (p. 242). Tschanne-Moran et al. (1998) connected teacher self-efficacy to the efforts and aspirations teachers put
forth in the classroom and their abilities to persevere and demonstrate resiliency during
difficult times. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) identified teachers’ perceptions of
self-efficacy in classroom management through an initial study of over 350 pre-service
and practicing teachers using the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES), which
later became known as the TSES. The OSTES asked teachers to rate their efficacy
perceptions on classroom management issues such as controlling disruptive behavior,
calming upset students, student compliance with classroom rules, using a classroom
management system, communicating expectations, and responding to defiant students.
Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) used both a short and long form of the survey and
identified similar overall reliability using Cronbach’s alpha for both the long form
(α = .94) and the short form (α = .90) of the survey.

Teachers’ perceptions of their classroom management abilities served as
mediating factors of their self-efficacy. Similarly, Bandura (1997) and Tschannen-Moran
and Woolfolk Hoy (2007) connected a strong sense of self-efficacy in classroom
management to the establishment of an effective learning environment. Dicke et al.
(2014) identified the importance of a strong sense of self-efficacy in classroom
management based on the impact of classroom disturbances on teacher burnout and
emotional exhaustion through a longitudinal study format. In a study of over 1,200
teacher candidates, using a moderating mediation model and the classroom management
subset of the TSES, Dicke et al. (2014) discovered that a lower sense of self-efficacy in
classroom management served as a predictor of emotional exhaustion. Dicke et al.
(2014) found that teachers who felt capable of handling classroom disturbances reported
fewer disturbances than teachers with lower perceptions of their self-efficacy, and those
teachers with higher sense of self-efficacy tended to be less impacted by classroom disturbances.

Gibbs and Powell (2012) studied 197 primary school teachers and identified the need for classroom management strategies to support strong self-efficacy development for teachers and student achievement. Schonert-Reichl (2017) studied the use of social emotional learning in 28 urban elementary schools to reduce student behavioral issues and found that teachers with higher sense of self-efficacy implemented programs to support social emotional learning with higher fidelity than their counterparts with lower sense of self-efficacy. Garwood, Harris, and Tomick (2017) surveyed 147 teachers of grades kindergarten through 12 before and after professional development focused on building a positive classroom environment and found that 86% of teachers who changed their classroom management approaches based on their training reported better classroom management practices and a greater feeling of satisfaction with their jobs. Klassen and Chiu (2010) studied 1,430 teachers in grades kindergarten through 12 and identified connections between stress, low sense of teacher self-efficacy, and classroom management issues. Similarly, in a study of 243 secondary teachers, Brouwers and Tomic (2000) found that teachers with lower sense of self-efficacy reported high levels of emotional exhaustion.

**Teacher self-efficacy and student engagement.** Skinner and Belmont (1993) identified engaged students as those students who demonstrated “sustained behavior involvement in learning activities accompanied by positive emotional tone” (p. 572). Skinner and Belmont (1993) studied the reciprocity of teacher behavior and student engagement in a longitudinal study of students in grades 3-5 in a rural-suburban school district. Using the context of classroom structure, autonomy support, and involvement
with students, Skinner and Belmont (1993) found that teacher behavior such as spending time with students, allowing students to work at their own pace, providing a rationale for the importance of learning, and having high expectations of students impacted the level of students’ perceptions of their behavioral and emotional engagement in the classroom. Skinner and Belmont (1993) highlighted the need for high levels of engagement with students who lack motivation because students who initially lacked motivation tended to see a decrease in their motivation over the course of the school year. Students who showed higher levels of engagement showed higher academic achievement levels than similar students with lower levels of engagement (Skinner, Wellborn, & Connell, 1990).

Parental support served as one context in relation to teacher self-efficacy and student engagement. Teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy impacted the ways in which they perceived support from their students’ families and the community. Coladarci (1992) and Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, and Brissie (1987) identified teacher self-efficacy as a strong predictor of parental involvement. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2007) surveyed 255 teachers with 1-29 years of experience using the TSES and identified a weak relationship ($r = .15$ and $r = .19$) between the contexts of parental involvement and community support and the self-efficacy beliefs of career level teachers when compared to novice level teachers. Stipek (2012) surveyed 473 third and fifth grade teachers in 196 rural and urban schools in three states and examined the effects of student characteristics and perceived levels of administrative and parental support. Stipek (2012) identified teachers’ perceptions of the parental involvement barriers, such as attending conferences, helping with homework, and literacy levels as the strongest predictor of teacher self-efficacy.
Summary of the Literature Review

The researcher examined literature related to organizational climate, teacher self-efficacy, and rural schools. Hoy et al. (1991) identified three principal behavior dimensions (i.e., supportive, directive, and restrictive) as important constructs that impacted the overall organizational climate of schools. Hoy et al. (1991) based their explanation of the constructs of principal behavior dimensions within the school organizational climate on the shared perceptions of teachers gathered through the use of the OCDQ-RE.

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) identified three constructs of teacher self-efficacy necessary for effective teaching: classroom management, use of instructional strategies, and student engagement. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) developed the TSES as a means of examining teacher self-efficacy beliefs. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) identified the three constructs as important factors and stated the importance of further research related to principal leadership behaviors and the difference these behaviors make upon teachers’ efficacy beliefs.

While the researcher reviewed studies conducted in a variety of school types (i.e., rural, urban, and suburban), the researcher discovered that other researchers did not delineate data in relation to specific types of schools. This study attempted to focus the investigation of principal behavior dimensions and teacher self-efficacy specifically in rural school settings as a means of examining the principal behaviors and teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy in rural schools as a construct of its own. Coladarci (2007) stated the need for closely examining the context of rural schools as a means of creating a richer understanding of an inherently rural environment.
Chapter III: Methodology of the Study

To identify the relationship of principal behavior dimensions on teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy, the researcher used a survey method and quantitative statistical analysis as a means of analyzing the relationship between the two variables. The researcher utilized two surveys to complete the study: the OCDQ-RE to identify teachers’ perceptions of the principal behavior dimensions of supportive, directive, or restrictive and the TSES to measure teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy in the areas of student engagement, classroom management, and instructional strategies.

Research Design

The researcher utilized purposive sampling in a non-experimental design to survey the perceptions of elementary teachers in rural schools to complete the quantitative study. The researcher chose purposive or judgmental sampling based on the criteria that participants should have similar characteristics to support the relevancy of the study (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). To participate in the study, respondents needed to be elementary teachers of grades kindergarten through five in rural schools in a southeastern state. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to restrict participation based on job type, location, and years in which the principal had worked at the participating school. The researcher chose a non-experimental correlational design for the study based criteria in relation to both the participants and the location of the study (Tanner, 2012), conducted in elementary schools in four rural school districts. These criteria negated the use of both random sampling and random assignment (Tanner, 2012). The use of the survey method indicated that all participants answered the same questions, which eliminated the need for a treatment or control group (Tanner, 2012). The researcher used a survey and then analyzed the results using quantitative methods to
make generalizations about the perceptions of a specific, large population of elementary teachers in two rural school systems (Tanner, 2012). The researcher used an electronic format for delivery of the survey. According to McCoy and Marks (2001), electronic surveys allowed researchers to collect data accurately because data did not have to be manually entered into a computer system, response time tended to be quicker, and email contact ensured that the participant actually received the survey.

Participants in the study responded to two surveys via an electronic format. The researcher utilized surveys because the structure of a survey allowed for data collection from a large number of participants, which supported generalizability of the study. The researcher chose to survey elementary school teachers because they teach the same students throughout the day or teach the same grade level or subject matter and have similar experiences related to the types of teaching strategies used and similar classroom environments. The schools that participated in the study had principals who had served in their roles for at least one full school year. The researcher identified this characteristic as important because teachers in schools with a principal of less than one full school year have not had enough time to adequately establish a working relationship with their principal. Principals whose school faculties participated in the study had completed at least one full school year in the same school. Of the principals who responded to the request to participate in the study, four school faculties had to be excluded because the principal had less than one year of experience in the building.

Population of the Study

The population consisted of elementary teachers (n = 400) in four rural school districts in a southeastern state. The teachers in the study consisted of regular classroom elementary teachers in grades kindergarten through five. The teachers in the study either
taught the same grade level of students throughout the day or taught only students in
grades kindergarten through five but may have been subject-specific teachers, such as
teachers who taught only English/language arts or mathematics during the day.

The rural school systems in the study served students from grades
pre-kindergarten through 12 and were located in areas with a population designated as
having over 70% of the residents living in a rural area (Roehrich-Patrick & Moreo, 2016).
One of the rural school systems that participated in the study met qualifications for Title
II grants based on participation in the Rural and Low Income School (RLIS) program and
met requirements for NCES census codes 32 Town, Distant, 41-Rural, Fringe, and
42-Rural, Distant (Ratcliffe et al., 2016). The United States Department of Education
developed the RLIS program as a mechanism for providing support for student
achievement in rural schools (United States Department of Education, 2018). This school
system had at least 70% of its population living in areas designated as rural by the United
States Census Bureau (Roehrich-Patrick & Moreo, 2016). The other participating rural
school systems had at least 50% of its population living in areas that are deemed rural by
the United States Census Bureau (Roehrich-Patrick & Moreo, 2016).

Data Collection

Instrumentation. The researcher utilized two surveys to collect data for the
study. Hoy et al. (1991) designed the OCDQ-RE (see Appendix A) as a tool for
measuring the principal behavior dimensions in the organizational climate of the school.
The OCDQ-RE examined six behaviors, three related to principal behaviors—directive,
supportive, or restrictive—and three related to teacher behaviors—collegial, intimated,
and disengaged. Hoy et al. (1991) used a Likert scale from 1 (rarely occurs) to 4 (very
frequently occurs). For the purpose of the study, the researcher reported only the
principal behavior dimensions subtests in the results, but the respondents completed the entire survey so as not to compromise both the reliability and validity of the survey. Hoy et al. (1991) developed the OCDQ-RE to measure the following dimensions of principal behavior: directive principal behaviors through questions 5, 10, 17, 24, 30, 34, 35, 39, 41; supportive principal behaviors through questions 4, 9, 15, 16, 22, 23, 28, and restrictive principal behaviors through questions 11, 18, 25, 31, 36. The researcher acquired permission from the developer to administer the survey in an electronic format (see Appendix B).

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) developed the TSES as a means of gathering information of teachers’ perceptions regarding their sense of efficacy in three areas: student engagement through questions 2, 3, 4, 11; instructional strategies through questions 5, 9, 20, 12; and student management through questions 1, 6, 7, 8. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) created a long and short form of the TSES and developed a Likert scale which ranged from a 1 (nothing) to 9 (a great deal) for scoring. For the purpose of this study, the short form was used (see Appendix C). The researcher chose to use the short form of the TSES because the reliability and validity of both instruments had little variance, and the shorter form utilized less of the respondents’ survey completion time. The researcher acquired permission from the creators to administer the survey in an electronic format (see Appendix D and Appendix E).

The researcher utilized two survey structures to include a greater number of participants in the study. Initially, officials in two rural districts agreed to allow teachers to participate in the study, but those districts required the researcher to administer the surveys electronically. Due to a low participation rate utilizing an electronic format, the researcher invited two additional districts to participate. The researcher also offered the
additional participating systems the option to participate using a paper survey structure utilizing the same surveys. The researcher initially utilized SurveyMonkey software to administer the surveys electronically to the participants in the study. The SurveyMonkey software was designed to allow respondents to participate in the survey method through the use of a single sign on link sent via email to each participant. This design protected the identity of all of the participants and ensured that each participant completed the survey once and did not share it with others who did not meet participation criteria. After the participants completed the survey, the researcher loaded the responses into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis.

In the first district, three principals out of six possible principals gave consent to survey the staff, and in the second district, four school principals out of 13 possible principals (31%) consented to allow their staff members to participate. Three schools were excluded from participation because the principal had not completed one full year in the school. Of the seven possible participating schools, teachers in six of the schools received their surveys via SurveyMonkey. One school in the initial group chose to participate via paper surveys rather than SurveyMonkey. Due to a low participation rate, the researcher contacted another school system, and one principal consented to allow teachers to participate in the study. The researcher sent surveys to 135 teachers via SurveyMonkey with 35 teachers participating in the survey (26%). The researcher contacted officials in another rural school system, and after receiving permission to conduct research in the system, the researcher contacted principals and received permission to administer the survey via a paper format. Of the 115 surveys distributed, the researcher received 62 paper surveys (54%) from the six schools that participated. In total, 65% of the respondents chose to participate in the study.
Procedure. The researcher contacted four rural school district officials to seek permission to survey the teachers in the districts. The participating districts were chosen based on having similar rural designations and low principal turnover. One district required the researcher to present an outline of the focus of the study to the school board members at a monthly school board meeting. The other districts granted permission via email. The researcher submitted an outline of the research as a means of explaining both the focus and purpose of the research, and requested permission to conduct research (see Appendix F and Appendix G). The researcher assured district officials that the district, individual schools, or individual teachers would not be identified. After district officials granted consent, the researcher contacted principals of the elementary schools in each district.

The researcher sent each principal a letter (see Appendix H) via email asking for consent to allow teachers to participate. The researcher followed each email request with a phone call to answer any questions principals may have had regarding the study. The researcher assured principals that neither the schools nor the teachers would be identified during the study. After the principals granted consent, the researcher communicated with Instructional Technology personnel to ensure that the correct email addresses were used to contact teachers. The researcher sent each teacher an email (see Appendix I) with a link for the survey and an explanation of the study. The researcher included an implied consent option that reassured teachers their participation was optional and that survey answers would be anonymously reported via the online survey. At the beginning of the survey, teachers chose an option that stated either I give consent to participate, which allowed the participant to complete the survey or I do not consent, which ended the survey. The survey had a two-week completion timeline. At the end of the first week,
principals received a follow up email asking them to encourage teachers to complete the survey. Due to a low return rate of the online surveys, the researcher contacted two additional rural district office personnel via email and received permission to conduct research in those districts. One of the districts chose to use the online survey method, and in the other district, principals allowed the researcher to distribute surveys via a paper pencil format. The researcher delivered the surveys to each school in the district and included a return envelope so that the surveys could be returned via mail within one week of distribution. The researcher numbered the surveys as a means of ensuring that the survey responses would remain together for each respondent. A designated person from each school returned the surveys via mail, and the researcher entered the survey responses into SPSS.

Analytical Methods

The researcher utilized the 26th version of SPSS to conduct a Pearson r correlation to determine the relationship between the variable of the highest scored principal behavior dimensions and the variables of teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in student engagement, classroom management, and the use of instructional strategies. Tanner (2012) identified the following characteristics of a Pearson r correlation: the correlation consisted of a comparison of two variables, the measurement consisted of an interval scale, the variables had a linear relationship, and the population was normally distributed. These assumptions must be met to calculate a Pearson r correlation. The researcher chose the Pearson r correlation because the research questions consisted of two variables that were measured on an interval scale and the population was normally distributed among kindergarten through fifth grade teachers in rural schools.
Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) used a Likert scale for the TSES. The use of a Likert scale in the survey allowed participants to choose the number that most accurately described their perception of their performance for each statement included in the survey. The numerical levels indicated an increasing amount of strength in relation to the amount of control teachers perceived in relation to the question of *How much can you do?* as a response to each statement. The interval choices in the survey ranked from *nothing* to *a great deal*.

**Reliability and Validity**

Tanner (2012) defined reliability as a reflection of “how well scores from an initial testing agreed with scores from a second administration for the group who took the test” (p. 408). Tanner (2012) further stated that if groups are similar then the results should transfer to another group with very little margin of error. Hoy et al. (1991) identified the following alpha reliability scores for the principal behavior subtests of the OCDQ-RE: supportive (.94), directive (.88), and restrictive (.81). Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) identified the following reliability scores for the short form of the TSES based on Cronbach’s alpha to determine internal consistency of the score of each individual item in the survey when compared to the other items used in the survey (Tanner, 2012): engagement (.81), instruction (.86), management (.86) and overall TSES (.90).

According to Creswell (2014), construct validity occurred based on “adequate definitions and measures of variables” (p. 204), and Tanner (2012) further described construct validity as the extent to which a specific construct is adequately measured. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) determined construct validity for the TSES through the use of a comparison of the survey results from the TSES to other measures of
self-efficacy by having survey participants answer both the TSES, the RAND items
\((r = .18, \ p < 0.01)\), and the Gibson and Dembo Teacher Efficacy Scale.

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) reported high levels of construct validity
between the TSES and the personal teaching efficacy \((r = .64, \ p < .01)\) and general
teaching efficacy \((r = .16, \ p < 0.01)\). Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001)
determined that “positive correlations with other measures of personal teaching efficacy
provided evidence for construct validity” (p. 801) and found little difference between the
long and short forms of the TSES. Hoy et al. (1991) identified the construct validity for
the OCDQ-RE based on correlating each dimension with the original OCDQ, developed
by Hoy in 1972. Hoy et al. (1991) identified positive correlations for principal openness
\((r = .52, \ p < .01)\) with all constructs of the original survey through the use of factor
analysis.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

The researcher considered the impact of limitations regarding the study. Simon
(2011) defined limitations as “potential weaknesses in your study and are out of your [the
researchers’] control” (p. 1). Limitations for the study included the following.

- The researcher administered the survey via an online format using SurveyMonkey
  software. Teachers may have been hesitant to complete an online survey based on
  concerns regarding anonymity. The researcher stated in the invitation to
  participate that school systems, schools, and teachers would not be identified.

- Teachers participating in the study needed access to a computer, internet
  connectivity, and the necessary computer skills to complete the online survey.
  Some teachers may not have access to internet in their homes, so the surveys had
to be completed at school; with limited time at school, this may have prevented some teachers from participating.

- The number of kindergarten through fifth grade teachers in the school system limited the population size.
- Due to a low participation rate utilizing an electronic format, the option of completing the surveys via paper format was added to the methodology.
- 96% of the participants chose the supportive principal behavior as their highest rated principal behavior dimension; therefore, the other behaviors were not included in the analysis.

The researcher identified delimitations necessary for the focus of the study. The delimitations helped to “limit the scope and define the boundaries” (Simon, 2011, p. 1) of the investigative research.

- The researcher surveyed full-time, certified teachers of grades kindergarten through five. The researcher focused on the perceptions of elementary teachers to narrow the scope of the impact of the study and the version of the OCDQ-RE survey used in the study was developed specifically for elementary teachers. Special education teachers and teachers who taught subjects such as library, physical education, art, or music were not included in the population to limit the scope of responses. Also, some elementary schools consisted of pre-kindergarten teachers or teachers of grades six through eight. These teachers did not participate in the study. Some schools had fourth grade as the terminal grade for the building.
• The researcher chose to study teachers in rural schools. Rural schools served as the place of research based on the unique cultural, socio-economic, and equity conditions that impacted teachers and schools in rural areas. In addition, schools had to meet rural school requirements as identified by the NCES.

• The use of surveys allowed the researcher to gather a larger amount of data in a short timeframe. The use of surveys did not allow participants the opportunity to justify or explain answers.

• The researcher chose to discard any schools where the principal had been at that school for less than one full school year. The researcher chose this factor to limit participation due to the fact that teachers in schools with a new principal may not have had adequate time to establish a working relationship with their principal.

• The survey had a time limit of two weeks to ensure that teachers completed the survey in a timely manner.

Assumptions of the Study

Simon (2011) defined assumptions as those things that, while out of the control of the researcher, their inclusion justified the purpose of the study. In conducting this research, the researcher made several assumptions regarding participant involvement. First, the researcher assumed that teachers answered the surveys honestly based on a reflection of their individual experiences without discussing answer choices with colleagues. The researcher cannot control for someone’s feelings at the time of the survey versus the way they may feel or perceive their efficacy on a daily basis. Second, the researcher assumed that the participants who received the email invitation completed the survey. The survey software sent a unique code to each participant to eliminate the
possibility of participants sharing the survey code with others. Third, the researcher assumed the population studied was representative of the larger population of teachers of similar grades without knowing the school culture before administering the surveys. Fourth, the researcher expected that the participants would have a common understanding of the educational language used in the surveys. Finally, the researcher held the belief that people with similar experiences held similar perceptions of their behavior and the behavior of their school leaders.
Chapter IV: Analysis and Results

The researcher conducted an analysis of the data collected via SurveyMonkey and through paper surveys from teachers in four rural school systems in a southeastern state to determine the relationship between principal behavior dimensions on teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in rural schools. The participants in the study consisted of teachers in grades kindergarten through five in four rural school systems in a southeastern state. The researcher focused the data analysis on the relationship between the following variables: the principal behavior dimension, self-efficacy in student engagement, self-efficacy in the use of instructional strategies, and self-efficacy in classroom management. Based on the results of the surveys, the researcher chose to focus the study on the supportive principal behavior dimension. Hoy et al. (1991) identified the supportive principal behavior dimension through characteristics such as mutual respect, openness to suggestions, demonstration of appreciation toward teachers, and clarity of explanations.

Data Analysis

The researcher utilized SPSS to perform a Pearson r correlation to determine if a relationship existed between the supportive principal behavior dimension from the OCDQ-RE (Hoy et al., 1991) and teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy, identified through the use of the TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). According to Tanner (2012), a Pearson r correlation had to meet certain assumptions to be considered valid. The researcher tested each research question and identified that each question consisted of two variables, and the variables consisted of an interval scale for measurement. Additionally, the variables had a linear relationship and the population was normally distributed among kindergarten through fifth grade teachers in rural
schools. The researcher analyzed each research question and determined the significance between the two variables in each question. In this chapter, the researcher examined the significance level based on the alpha level set at $\alpha < .05$ for each question.

**Research Questions**

The researcher developed three research questions to guide the study. The researcher utilized SPSS to conduct a Pearson $r$ correlation to assess the relationship between supportive principal behavior dimension and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in student engagement, use of instructional strategies, and classroom management. Ninety-six participants returned the surveys with 96% of the respondents rating the supportive behavior dimension of their principal as highest on the OCDQ-RE when compared to the principal behavior dimensions of directive, with 4% of teachers reporting their principal’s behavior as mostly directive, and no teachers reporting their principal’s behavior as restrictive. Although principals demonstrated supportive, restrictive, and directive behaviors when interacting with staff, typically principals demonstrate one behavior more frequently than others (Hoy et al., 1991). The researcher chose to analyze the relationship between the supportive principal behavior dimension and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy because 96% of the survey respondents ranked the supportive principal behaviors as the highest level when reflecting upon their principals’ behavior dimensions.

**Research question 1.** According to the results of teachers utilizing Hoy’s (1986) Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire-Revised for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy’s (2001) Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale—Short Form (TSES), what relationship does the supportive principal behavior dimension have on teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in student engagement in elementary schools in four rural systems in a southeastern state?
The researcher computed the data from the surveys for the first research question using a Pearson r correlation and identified a statistically significant, positive correlation between supportive principal behavior and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in student engagement ($r = .189, p = .036$) (see Table 1). Overall, there was a small, positive relationship between supportive principal behavior and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in student engagement. The researcher deduced that increases in teachers’ perceptions of supportive principal behavior correlated to an increase in self-efficacy scores in the construct of student engagement on the TSES.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation between Supportive Principal Behavior and Student Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Principal Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy in Student Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research question 2. According to the results of teachers utilizing Hoy’s (1986) Organizational Climate Description for Elementary Schools-Revised for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy’s (2001) Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale—Short Form (TSES), what relationship does the supportive principal behavior dimension have on teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in instructional strategies in elementary schools in four rural school systems in a southeastern state?

The researcher computed the data from the surveys for the second research question using a Pearson r correlation and identified a statistically significant, positive correlation between the variables of supportive principal behavior and teachers’ sense of
self-efficacy in instructional strategies \( (r = .204, p = .026) \) (see Table 2). Overall, there was a small, positive relationship between supportive principal behavior and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in instructional strategies. The researcher deduced that increases in teachers’ perceptions of supportive principal behavior correlated to an increase in self-efficacy scores in the construct of instructional strategies on the TSES.

Table 2

*Correlation between Supportive Principal Behavior and Instructional Strategies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Supportive Principal Behavior</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (1-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy in Instructional Strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td>.204</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research question 3.** According to the results of teachers utilizing Hoy’s (1986) Organizational Climate Description for Elementary Schools-Revised for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) and Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy’s (2001) Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale—Short Form (TSES), what relationship does the supportive principal behavior dimension have on teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in classroom management in elementary schools in four rural school systems in a southeastern state?

The researcher computed the data from the surveys for the third research question using a Pearson r correlation and identified a positive correlation between the variables of supportive principal behavior and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in classroom management \( (r = .331, p = .001) \) (see Table 3).
Overall, there was a small to moderate, positive relationship between supportive principal behavior and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in classroom management. The researcher deduced that increases in teachers’ perceptions of supportive principal behavior correlated to an increase in self-efficacy scores in the construct of classroom management on the TSES.

**Summary of Results**

The researcher conducted a Pearson r correlation to determine the relationship between the variables of the three research questions. Overall, the researcher identified that the variable of the supportive principal behavior dimension had a positive correlation with each of the variables of teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. The strongest relationship existed between the supportive principal behavior dimension and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in classroom management.
Chapter V: Conclusions and Recommendations

The researcher engaged in the process of exploring the relationship between the variables of principal behavior dimensions and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy by examining teachers’ perceptions of their own self-efficacy and their perceptions of the behaviors their principals exhibited through interactions with the staff. Hoy (1986) identified three types of principal behavior dimensions—supportive, directive, and restrictive—as part of the overall school climate. Hoy et al. (1991), when developing the OCDQ-RE, questioned whether the group or the principal impacted group behavior. Ultimately, Hoy et al. (1991) arrived at the conclusion that actual behavior was less important than the way the group perceived the behavior and that those perceptions motivated the action of the group. Based on this premise and the results presented in Chapter IV, the researcher determined that rural teachers who participated in the study perceived their principals to be supportive and that a relationship existed between teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in student engagement, use of instructional strategies, and classroom management and the supportive principal behavior dimension.

Discussion and Conclusions of the Study

Hoy et al. (1991) developed the OCDQ-RE as a tool to survey teachers regarding their perceptions of principal behavior as part of the overall climate of the school. The researcher utilized the statements related to principal behavior as part of the study. The administration of the surveys presented a surprising result that the researcher did not expect. Of the 96 participants, 96% rated their principal highest in the supportive category of principal behavior, 4% rated their principal highest in the directive category, and 0% rated the principal highest in the restrictive category. This result is possibly connected to a limitation of the study that participating teachers were only from schools
in which the principal voluntarily agreed to allow the teachers to participate. Supportive principals may be more willing to allow their staff members to answer questions about their behavior, and teachers who work in a supportive environment may perceive themselves to have a stronger sense of self-efficacy because they are given both autonomy and support for their decisions.

Though the OCDQ-RE included three principal behavior dimensions, the researcher chose to focus on the supportive principal behavior dimension because of 96% of the survey respondents identified their principals as supportive. Supportive behaviors include demonstrating respect for the professional behaviors of teachers, concern for teachers’ well-being, giving authentic praise and constructive criticism, and communicating both vision and purpose (Hoy & Clover, 1986; Hoy et al., 1991; McCarley et al., 2016). Those findings have implications for the ways in which school leaders interact with their teachers. Whitaker (2013) further supported the notion of supportive behaviors by stating, “Great principals create a positive atmosphere in their schools. They treat every person with respect. In particular, they understand the power of praise” (p. 143). The researcher recognized the need to identify the principal behaviors that positively impacted teacher self-efficacy as a means of maximizing the effects of teachers and principals in rural schools, an often-underrepresented research locale.

**Implications for Practice**

As the researcher began the investigation into the constructs of teachers’ sense of self-efficacy and principal behavior dimensions, it became evident that while the researcher found similar studies, other researchers conducted investigations in rural, urban, and suburban school regions, yet they rarely disaggregated the results by regions.
By conducting the research in a variety of rural schools, the researcher could begin to create a better understanding of the unique characteristics of rural schools. The researcher found that rural schools could not clearly be defined and that most definitions were limited to geographic descriptions. Creating a more thorough description of the needs and characteristics of rural schools based on the geographic, economic, and demographic characteristics would enable school officials and policy makers to advocate for support and funding that would support the needs of rural schools.

Research into the particular behaviors principals exhibit and the relationship to teachers’ sense of self-efficacy would benefit school district officials who coach, mentor, and evaluate principals and support self-reflection of school administrators in rural school settings. The research could influence the types of professional development that is provided for school leaders, particularly around supporting teachers and creating an environment that supports teachers’ abilities to make decisions regarding student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Small rural districts may lack the funding for professional development opportunities for school leaders and the distance between schools may inhibit collaboration among principals.

The researcher identified a relationship between the supportive principal behavior dimension and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy. This information could be useful for principals who are interested in their own behaviors and the ways in which those behaviors relate to their teachers’ self-efficacy. This data could also be used to strengthen a mentoring program for new teachers or provide an opportunity for both personal reflection and self-directed study. Additionally, the data could be used to inform principals and leadership teams about budgeting and planning to provide support for the three areas identified in the survey. School leaders could give the survey again at
the end of the year as a means of tracking teacher growth in the areas of student engagement, instructional strategies, classroom management, and the teachers’ perceptions of the principal’s behavior.

Based on the findings of this study, a relationship does exist between the supportive principal behavior dimension and teacher self-efficacy. By conducting a thorough investigation into the relationship of principal behavior dimensions and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy, researchers would be able to identify the practices of school leaders that positively relate to a teacher’s sense of self-efficacy. This research would benefit both practitioners and collegiate-level instructors who train future leaders, specifically those leaders who work in rural schools. This research could also benefit district leaders who supervise and coach principals as they prepare for professional development for school leaders focused on creating opportunities to build teacher efficacy.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The culmination of the investigation caused the researcher to consider ways to add to the body of knowledge into the constructs of principal behavior dimensions and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy. A broader exploration into the relationships between these constructs could allow for a deeper understanding of the nature of those relationships and the effects those relationships have on other factors impacting school climate, such as teacher attrition, working conditions, student achievement, and parent engagement. The researcher identified the following recommendations related to the constructs of principal behavior dimensions and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy.

1. The researcher did not address the reasons why teachers chose specific ratings on either the OCDQ-RE or the TSES. A further investigation into the reasons why
teachers chose specific ratings would give researchers a deeper understanding of teachers’ perceptions of their own self-efficacy and the possible connections between principal behavior dimensions and those perceptions.

2. The use of a larger sample size may have given a broader range of scores, specifically in relation to principal behavior dimensions. Involving more participants may have resulted in a variance in scores, resulting in a higher number of scores in both the directive and restrictive behavior dimensions, thus giving a better insight into the relationship between the teachers’ self-efficacy scores and the principal behavior dimensions. Additionally, a larger sample size across a variety of rural school districts would better represent the constructs of teachers’ sense of self-efficacy and principal behavior dimensions in rural schools in general.

3. The researcher initially chose to study the supportive, restrictive, and directive principal behavior dimensions. The unequal distribution of ratings impacted this ability. By increasing the sample size or studying populations of teachers in a variety of settings, the ratings may have been more equally distributed which would have allowed for a more in-depth investigation into all three behavior dimensions.

4. The topic of the relationship between principal behavior dimensions and teacher self-efficacy could be strengthened by conducting the research in a variety of settings, such as Title I schools, urban schools, suburban schools, or in large versus small districts. By using the same study format but conducting the research in a variety of geographic and demographic areas, the researcher could identify trends, similarities, and differences in the types of behaviors that support teachers’ sense of self-efficacy. This type of information would be useful to school officials who work with school leaders in
schools that have organizational climate issues related to teachers’ perceptions of the ways in which they interact with their principal.

5. Broadening the study to a variety of rural areas, both across southeastern states or rural areas across the United States, would help to create richer descriptions of the unique characteristics of rural areas. Additionally, researchers could identify similar characteristics that could be used to inform legislators who could impact funding and policy making.

6. Finally, research could be conducted to examine teacher self-efficacy ratings and principal behavior dimension ratings in conjunction with school data. By examining teacher evaluation scores, achievement scores, student and parent surveys, and overall school data, a researcher or school official could examine the varied aspects of the school to present a complete picture of all of the components of a school. This would benefit school leaders and teachers and help them identify the parts of their school that are strong and the parts of their school that need to be strengthened. This information could be used to create comprehensive school plans and be useful to school leaders and policy makers who work with both funding and planning. This would be especially useful for school leaders who work in schools where teachers have indicated they do not feel empowered to make instructional decisions.

**Summary of the Study**

The researcher investigated the possible relationship between the supportive principal behavior dimension, identified by Hoy et al. (1991), and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy as a means of determining how the supportive principal behavior was most significantly associated with teachers’ sense of self-efficacy. The guiding purpose of the research was situated around both identifying those behaviors and connecting those
behaviors to the needs of principals and teachers in rural schools as a means of building
upon the body of research in rural areas, as rural areas need to be studied for their unique
needs to provide a rich, contextual description (Coladarci, 2007). The researcher focused
the study specifically on the supportive principal behaviors and teachers’ sense of
self-efficacy in student engagement, use of instructional strategies, and classroom
management to explore the possibility of a significant relationship between the behaviors
principals exhibited and the extent to which those behaviors correlated to teachers’
perceptions of their self-efficacy. Through the use surveys and a Pearson r correlation
analysis, the researcher determined that a statistically significant relationship existed
between the supportive principal behavior dimension and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy
in student engagement, use of instructional strategies, and classroom management in rural
elementary schools from four school districts in a southeastern state.
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Appendix A

Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire—Revised for Elementary Schools
**OCDQ-RE**

**Directions:** The following are statements about your school. Please indicate the extent to which each statement characterizes your school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rarely Occurs</th>
<th>Sometimes Occurs</th>
<th>Occasionally Occurs</th>
<th>Frequently Occurs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The teachers accomplish their work with vim, vigor, and pleasure.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Teachers’ closest friends are other faculty members at this school.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Faculty meetings are useless.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The principal goes out of his/her way to help teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The principal rules with an iron fist.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Teachers leave school immediately after school is over.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Teachers invite faculty members to visit them at home.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>There is a minority group of teachers who always oppose the majority.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>The principal uses constructive criticism.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>The principal checks the sign-in sheet every morning.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Routine duties interfere with the job of teaching.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Most of the teachers here accept the faults of their colleagues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Teachers know the family background of other faculty members.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Teachers exert group pressure on non-conforming faculty members.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>The principal explains his/her reasons for criticism to teachers.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>The principal listens to and accepts teachers’ suggestions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>The principal schedules the work for the teachers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Teachers have too many committee requirements.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Teachers help and support each other.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Teachers have fun socializing together during school time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Teachers ramble when they talk at faculty meetings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>The principal looks out for the personal welfare of teachers.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>The principal treats teachers as equals.</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>The principal corrects teachers’ mistakes.</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>Administrative paperwork is burdensome at this school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Teachers are proud of their school.</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>Teachers have parties for each other.</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>The principal compliments teachers.</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>The principal is easy to understand.</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>The principal closely checks classroom (teacher) activities.</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>Clerical support reduces teachers’ paperwork.</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>New teachers are readily accepted by colleagues.</td>
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<td>33.</td>
<td>Teachers socialize with each other on a regular basis.</td>
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<td>34.</td>
<td>The principal supervises teachers closely.</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>The principal checks lesson plans.</td>
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<td>36.</td>
<td>Teachers are burdened with busy work.</td>
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<td>37.</td>
<td>Teachers socialize together in small, select groups.</td>
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<td>38.</td>
<td>Teachers provide strong social support for colleagues.</td>
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<td>39.</td>
<td>The principal is autocratic.</td>
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<td>40.</td>
<td>Teachers respect the professional competence of their colleagues.</td>
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<td>41.</td>
<td>The principal monitors everything teachers do.</td>
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<td>42.</td>
<td>The principal goes out of his/her way to show appreciation to teachers.</td>
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</table>
Appendix B

Permission to Use Survey—Hoy
Email Communication Received: November 17, 2018

Hi Elizabeth,

You have my permission to use the OCDQ—RE for your research. Please make sure that you note on the electronic survey that the form is copyrighted under my name.

Good luck in your research.

Wayne

Wayne K. Hoy
Fawcett Professor Emeritus in
Education Administration
The Ohio State University
www.waynekhoy.com
Appendix C

Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale—Short Form
### Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale1 (short form)

**Teacher Beliefs**

Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kind of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.

|Teacher Beliefs                                                                 | How much can you do? |
|---                                                                           | Nothing | Very Little | Some Influence | Quite a Bit | A Great Deal |
| 1. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?      | (1)     | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)         |
| 2. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work? | (1)     | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)         |
| 3. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work? | (1)     | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)         |
| 4. How much can you do to help your students value learning?                  | (1)     | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)         |
| 5. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?             | (1)     | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)         |
| 6. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?             | (1)     | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)         |
| 7. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?          | (1)     | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)         |
| 8. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students? | (1)     | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)         |
| 9. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?                   | (1)     | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)         |
| 10. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused? | (1)   | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)         |
| 11. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school? | (1)     | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)         |
| 12. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?      | (1)     | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)         |
Appendix D

Permission Letter—Tschannen-Moran
November 17, 2018

Elizabeth,

You have my permission to use the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (formerly called the Ohio State Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale), which I developed with Anita Woolfolk Hoy, in your research. You can find a copy of the measure and scoring directions on my web site at http://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/mxtsch. Please use the following as the proper citation:


I will also attach directions you can follow to access my password protected web site, where you can find the supporting references for this measure as well as other articles I have written on this and related topics.

All the best,

Megan Tschannen-Moran  
William & Mary School of Education
Appendix E

Permission Letter—Woolfolk Hoy
Dear

You have my permission to use the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* in your research. A copy the scoring instructions can be found at:

http://u.osu.edu/hoy.17/research/instruments/

Best wishes in your work,

Anita Woolfolk Hoy, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus
Appendix F

Request to Conduct Research
Request to Conduct Research in ABC County

Researcher: Elizabeth Lackey  
Address: XXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXX  
Email: elizabeth.lackey@lmunet.edu  
Telephone Number: 865-207-8822

1. Position of Researcher: Doctoral Student--Lincoln Memorial University  
2. Instructor/Dissertation Advisor: Dr. Cherie Gaines, cherie.gaines@lmunet.edu;  
   865-617-9433  
3. Title: The Impact of Principal Behavior Dimensions on Teachers’ Perceptions of  
   Self-Efficacy in Rural Schools  
4. Description of Study  
   a. The purpose of the study is to investigate research for a dissertation which  
      fulfills requirements for the EdD program at Lincoln Memorial University.  
   b. Population: Kindergarten through fifth grade teachers in ABC County,  
      Tennessee.  
   c. Teachers will be given the opportunity to complete two surveys, which are  
      included in this request to conduct research. Participation is optional and will  
      take place during a time that does not impact instruction.  
   d. The surveys will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and will be  
      administered electronically.  
   e. All information collected from participation in the surveys will be kept  
      confidential. The researcher will not identify the ABC County School System,  
      participating schools, teachers, or administrators.  
   f. The study will help to identify principal behavior dimensions that support a  
      sense of efficacy in teachers. A sense of efficacy supports teacher retention  
      and has impact on the instructional environment of the classroom.  
5. Surveys Used in the Study: The Organizational Climate Description for  
   Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) used in the study was created by Wayne K. Hoy,  
   and the Teacher Sense of Self Efficacy Scale was developed by Megan  
   Tschannen-Moran and Anne Woolfolk Hoy. The factor analysis for the surveys  
   supports both high construct validity and a high level of reliability.  
6. Copies of permission letters and survey directions are attached to this request.  
   For the purpose of the study, the researcher will administer the surveys  
   electronically.  
7. The study will be completed by August of 2019. Surveys will be given in spring  
   semester of 2019.
Appendix G

Permission to Conduct Research
RE: Permission to Conduct Research – ABC County School System

To Whom It May Concern:

I am requesting permission to conduct a research study in the ABC County School System. I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program at Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee, and am in the process of writing my doctoral dissertation. The study is entitled *The Impact of Principal Behavior Dimensions on Teachers’ Perceptions of Self-Efficacy in Rural Schools*.

I am asking for permission to administer surveys to regular education certified teachers in grades kindergarten through fifth. The survey process should take no longer than 20 minutes and will not disrupt instructional time in the building. The surveys will be administered electronically using software that will protect the participants, the school, and the school system. The survey results will be compiled for my dissertation, and individual results of this study will remain confidential and anonymous. The ABC County School system, schools, or individual teachers will not be identified. The study will be published but only compiled results will be presented. There will be no impact to any relationship a teacher may have with the university, should the teacher choose not to participate in the study. Teachers may end their participation at any time.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. You may contact me via email at elizabeth.lackey@lmunet.edu

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Lackey
Doctoral Candidate
Lincoln Memorial University

Please sign and return this letter as informed consent to allow the teachers in your school system to participate in the study entitled: *The Impact of Principal Behavior Dimensions on Teachers’ Perceptions of Self-Efficacy in Rural Schools.*

______________________________     __________________
Signature                                  Date
Appendix H

Request to Conduct Research— Administrators
RE: Permission to Conduct Research – Administrators

To Whom It May Concern:

I am requesting permission to conduct a research study at your school. I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program at Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee, and am in the process of completing research to conclude my doctoral dissertation. The study is entitled *The Impact of Principal Behavior Dimensions on Teachers’ Perceptions of Self-Efficacy in Rural Schools.*

I am asking for permission to administer surveys to regular education certified teachers in grades kindergarten through fifth grade. The survey process should take no longer than 20 minutes and will not disrupt instructional time in the building. The surveys will be administered electronically using software that will protect the participants, the school, and the school system. The survey results will be compiled for my dissertation, and individual results of this study will remain confidential and anonymous. The ABC County School system, your school, your individual teachers, or you will not be identified. The study will be published but only compiled results will be presented. There will be no impact to any relationship a teacher may have with the university, should the teacher choose not to participate in the study. Teachers may end their participation at any time.

Your permission to conduct this study will not require any effort on your part. After receiving your permission, I will directly email teachers in your school. Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. If you have questions, you may contact me via email at elizabeth.lackey@lmunet.edu. You may also contact my faculty dissertation advisor, Dr. Cherie Gaines, at cherie.gaines@lmunet.edu.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Lackey

Doctoral Candidate

Lincoln Memorial University

Please sign and return this letter as informed consent to allow the teachers in your school to participate in the study entitled: *The Impact of Principal Behavior Dimensions on Teachers’ Perceptions of Self-Efficacy in Rural Schools.*

_________________________________________________________  _______________________
Signature                                              Date

School Name_______________________________________________
Appendix I

Permission to Conduct Research—Teachers
RE: Recruitment Invitation– Classroom Teachers

To Whom It May Concern:

I am inviting you to participate in a research study of teachers in rural schools. I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program at Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee and am in the process of writing my doctoral dissertation. The study is entitled *The Impact of Principal Behavior Dimensions on Teachers’ Perceptions of Self-Efficacy in Rural Schools.*

I am asking you to participate via a survey of principal behaviors and teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy. The survey process should take no longer than 20 minutes and will not disrupt instructional time in the building. The surveys will be administered electronically using software that will protect the participants, the school, and the school system. The survey results will be compiled for my dissertation and individual results of this study will remain absolutely confidential and anonymous. The ABC County School system, your school, and your individual input will not be identified. The study will be published but only compiled results will be presented. There will be no impact to any relationship a teacher may have with the university, should the teacher choose not to participate in the study. Teachers may end their participation at any time.

Your participation in this process will be greatly appreciated. In the next couple of weeks you will receive a link that will allow you to complete the survey anonymously. Completion of the survey will imply your consent to participate in the study. If you have any questions, please contact me via email at elizabeth.lackey@lmunet.edu.

Once again, thank you for considering participation in my dissertation study.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Lackey

Doctoral Candidate

Lincoln Memorial University